

Schusterman Program in Judaic and Israel Studies at the University of Oklahoma

Same Quality . . . New Name



Lynn Schusterman and Stacy Schusterman

Editor's Note: The change in name of the Schusterman/ Josey Judaic Studies Program to the Schusterman Program in Judaic and Israel Studies reflects the founders' desire for a renewed emphasis on modern Israel.

Lynn Schusterman's father taught her that being charitable is "the rent we pay" for our life on this planet. Charles Schusterman's insatiable, lifelong thirst for knowledge propelled him from his humble start as the son of Russian immigrants to the top of his class at the University of Oklahoma, and then to a career as a highly successful businessman and philanthropist.

In 1987, the Schustermans created a family foundation and began fulfilling in earnest the obligation of *tikkun olam*, "repairing the world." Two pillars of their foundation are an individual's obligation to give back to their community and the importance of education.

The Judaic Studies program began in 1993 with the establishment of the Schusterman/ Josey Chair as a living memorial to Charles's father, Sam Schusterman, and to Lynn's father, Harold Josey. Thanks to a wonderful partnership between the Schusterman Family Foundation and the University of Oklahoma, what started as a single professorship has grown into a program.

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JuSt is particularly fortunate to have Professor Norman Stillman, the inaugural holder of the Schusterman/ Josey Chair, as its energetic, wise, and accomplished Director. He has taught and mentored hundreds of students, skillfully and supportively helping them apply the lessons acquired in his classroom to the lives they are building beyond OU. Professor Stillman is the driving force behind the growth of JuSt.

The Foundation is supporting the expansion of Judaic and Israel Studies on a dozen university campuses. It is also working to introduce students nationwide to facets of modern Israel through courses, visiting professors, conferences, and guest lectures. We fund these activities because we believe in the power of education. When subjects are rigorously examined, discussed, and shared, they become more familiar, better understood; we become richer as individuals and as a society.

The Foundation promotes the value of national and community service. We fund alternative spring break trips, enabling students to spend their holidays improving the lives of others. Philanthropy, education, service—three interrelated values deeply embedded in Jewish tradition which we see brought to life through JuSt.

Our values remain constant: to offer students opportunities to explore ideas, gain an appreciation of the world, and develop a greater sense of possibility for themselves and their communities. In the Judaic and Israel Studies program of the University of Oklahoma, all of these motivating forces come into beautiful alignment.

New Endowed Professor Assumes Position

Alan Levenson joined OU this past autumn as the first Schusterman Professor of Jewish Religious and Intellectual History. Levenson spent the last eighteen years at Siegal College of Judaic Studies in Cleveland, Ohio, and has been a visiting professor at Case Western Reserve, John Carroll University and the College of William and Mary. He has won a number of prestigious fellowships, including an American Council of Learned Societies grant for his second book, *Between Philosemitism and Antisemitism: Defenses of Jews and Judaism in Germany, 1871-1932*. His first book, *Modern Jewish Thinkers: An Introduction*, 2nd Edition, has been adopted widely for classes on Jewish thought. He is also the author of *The Story of Joseph: A Journey of Jewish Interpretation* and many articles on Jewish history, thought and pedagogy. Among his ongoing projects, he is editing the History of Jews and Juda-

ism in the Blackwell Companion series, directing a project on the history of Brith Emeth Synagogue, and, mainly, working on a history of how Jews in Germany, America and Israel have kept the Bible central to the modern Jewish experience, tentatively titled, "The Making of the Modern Jewish Bible."

"I am very honored to join such a wonderful program, department and university. My family and I couldn't have asked for a warmer welcome." Professor Levenson taught "Genesis Through Jewish Eyes" in the autumn semester, and "Judaism: A Religious History" as well as "American Jew/Jewish American" in the spring. Regarding his "Genesis" class, Levenson said, "I was very impressed with ability and openness of OU students to enter a foreign world, which traditional Jewish Bible commentary surely is."

Professor Levenson has jumped into life at OU with both feet, giv-



Alan J. Levenson
Schusterman Professor of Jewish
Religious and Intellectual History

ing lectures at the always-popular JuSt Lunch Brown-bag Lecture series, Oklahoma City's Jewish University and Dallas's Jewish Learningfest. He has also represented the university nationally, delivering papers at the annual conferences of the German Studies Association and the Association for Jewish Studies.

How do we do it? Our Associated Faculty

The Schusterman Program in Judaic and Israel Studies at OU has five full-time faculty but offers dozens of courses with Jewish themes and content. We are able to do this for one reason only: a splendid associated faculty whose interests include the Jewish experience, broadly understood. A complete list of our associated faculty appears at the bottom of this page, but we have also decided to profile a few of these faculty members in each newsletter. Here are the first two:

Prof. Karin Schutjer: "This is my tenth year as a faculty member in the Modern Languages department at OU. I spent last year with my family (including my husband Ben Alpers, a professor in the Honors College) in Leipzig, Germany, a beautiful and culturally interesting city in the former East. I was doing research for the book I'm currently writing about the role of Judaism within the work of J.W. Goethe (1749-1832), who is arguably the most influential writer and cultural figure in cultural history. Goethe's relationship to Judaism is contradictory and complex, consisting of both admiration and prejudice. My thesis is that behind Goethe's very mixed representations of Judaism stand crucial concerns and tensions within his own thinking. In fact he paradoxically wrestles against precisely those impulses in Judaism for which he feels the greatest

affinity, which most approach his own vision of modernity. In February I attended an exploratory "German and Jewish Studies Workshop" at Duke University. The organizers invited German Studies scholars from around the country with the goal of "establishing a permanent professional forum for the research and teaching of German and Jewish Studies in North America." This is an exciting development that reflects the increasing centrality of Jewish Studies within the academic study of German culture and literature.

Prof. Stephen Norwood: *The Third Reich in the Ivory Tower: Complicity and Conflict on American Campuses* has been published by Cambridge University Press, 2009. Professor Norwood's two-volume, *Encyclopedia of American Jewish History*, edited with his wife, Professor Eunice G. Pollack of the University of North Texas, and published by ABC-CLIO in 2008, received BOOKLIST's Editor's Choice Award as well as a starred review. It includes articles by 125 leading scholars in American Jewish history from the United States, Israel,

Ninth Annual Yedida Stillman Memorial Lecture Draws Record Crowd

Noted historian Yael Zerubavel delivered the ninth annual Yedida Kalfon Stillman Memorial Lecture on Thursday evening, February 19th, 2009. The title of her talk and the subject of her ongoing book project was: "The New Jew, the Arab, and the 'Hebrew Bedouin': The Transformations of an Israeli Identity." As has been the case every year, it was a standing-room only crowd.

Dr. Zerubavel is professor of Jewish Studies and History and director of the program at Rutgers University. She is an internationally recognized expert in Israeli collective memory; history and memory; Zionism and Hebrew national culture; myths and ritual; Modern Hebrew literature; and Jewish immigrant literature. She is best known as the author of *Recovered Roots: Collective Memory and the Making of Israeli National Tradition*. (University of Chicago Press, 1995, paperback, 1997). She is also the author of numerous scholarly articles,

including: "Female Images in a State of War: Ideology, Crisis, and the Politics of Gender in Israel," and "Trans-Historical Encounters in the Land of Israel: National Memory, Symbolic Bridges, and the Literary Imagination." Also a celebrated teacher, she regularly teaches courses in Israeli Culture, Cultural Memory, Jewish Immigrant Experience, and Jewish Memory.



*Professor Yael Zerubavel
Rutgers University*

The Memorial Lecture was established through the generosity of the family, friends and colleagues to honor the memory of the late beloved teacher and world-renowned scholar, Yedida Kalfon Stillman, who died in February 1998. The first Memorial Lecture was given in February 2001, by Professor Paula Sanders of Rice University, who was introduced by President David Boren, who shared his personal reminiscences of Yedida Stillman. The Memorial Lecture has become a major annual campus event. In his opening remarks, Professor Norman Stillman expressed gratitude that every Memorial Lecturer has not only been a distinguished scholar in his late wife's field of Middle Eastern and Sephardic culture, but has also been a colleague, friend and/or student.

Associated Faculty, cont. from pg. 2

Europe, and Canada, with maps by Sir Martin Gilbert. Professors Norwood and Pollack delivered invited lectures on the *Encyclopedia* at the Simon Wiesenthal Center's Museum of Tolerance in Los Angeles in August 2008, and at the Boston Center for Jewish Culture, Vilna Shul, in June 2008. Professor Norwood's article "American Jewish Muscle: Forging a New Masculinity in the Streets and in the Ring, 1890-1940," will be published in the journal *Modern Judaism* in 2009. Professors Norwood and Pollack organized a roundtable at the Association for Jewish Studies convention in Washington DC in December 2008 on "Antisemitism on American University Campuses."

Associated Faculty:

- Benjamin L. Alpers**, Honors College
- Jose R. Canoy**, History
- Luis Cortest**, Modern Languages (Spanish)
- Gisela Heffes**, Modern Languages (Spanish)
- Misha Klein**, Anthropology
- William H. Mc Donald**, English
- Garold D. Mills**, History
- Stephen H. Norwood**, History
- Maurice M. Roumani**, International & Area Studies/History
- Karin L. Schutjer**, Modern Languages (German)
- Daniel C. Snell**, History
- Dinah M. Stillman**, Modern Languages (French)

Why the 18s?

18 (Hai) is the numerical value of the Hebrew word "life," and it is custom to donate in multiples of 18. It's a toast to life (l'hayim) and harmless bit of folk belief. (It's also a good way of keeping tabs on charitable donations – when the Police Benevolent League says you gave \$36 last year (not \$35) you can believe them.)

\$ 18 To Support the Judaic Studies (JuSt) Program

\$ 36 To Sponsor a JuSt Lunch Event

\$ 180 To Sponsor a JuSt Lecture Event

\$ 360 To Sponsor JuSt student awards and scholarships.

\$ 1800 To Sponsor next year's JuSt newsletter.

Other ideas to promote Judaic & Israel studies at OU? Please call our office 405-325-6508.

OUR CORE FACULTY



Clockwise from top left: Norman A. Stillman, Schusterman/Josey Chair & Director of Program; Shmuel Shepkaru, Associate Professor of Medieval Jewish History; Ori Krutz, Associate Professor & Director of Hebrew; Lea Reches, Hebrew Instructor; Carsten Schap-kow, Assistant Professor of Modern Jewish History.

NEW ISRAEL STUDIES SCHOLARSHIPS OFFERED FOR 2009-2010

The Bezael Foundation has funded a pilot program consisting of the following Study Abroad Scholarships: Three \$5,000 summer scholarships, one \$10,000 semester-length scholarship and one \$20,000 scholarship for a full-year's study in Israel. This generous grant from Stacy Schusterman will allow **five** University of Oklahoma graduate and undergraduate students the opportunity to study in an Israeli University. In addition to this new pilot program, Judaic Studies will again award three other scholarships (one from the Zarrow Family Foundation and two from the Sigma Delta Tau Sorority in honor of Esther Shnier). These scholarships offer financial support for Judaic studies students here on the Norman campus.

The Program is grateful and proud to be able to provide this level of support to our students.

WHY HAS PROFESSOR STILLMAN BEEN SMILING SO MUCH?

In the late fall of 2009, Brill, an academic publisher based in Leiden, The Netherlands, will be publishing a five-volume, 2,250 entry, 1.5 million word *Encyclopedia of Jews in the Islamic World (EJIW)*. Representing the most up-to-date scholarship by specialists from around the world, the *EJIW* will cover Jewish history, religion, and culture. This encyclopedia aims to be the definitive academic reference literature on the Jews of Muslims lands, particularly in the late medieval, early modern and modern periods. Additionally, *EJIW* will contain a special edition of the Index Islamicus with a sole focus on the Jews of Muslim lands and an online edition. Can you guess the name of the general editor? Becoming a grandfather for the first time probably hasn't hurt either...

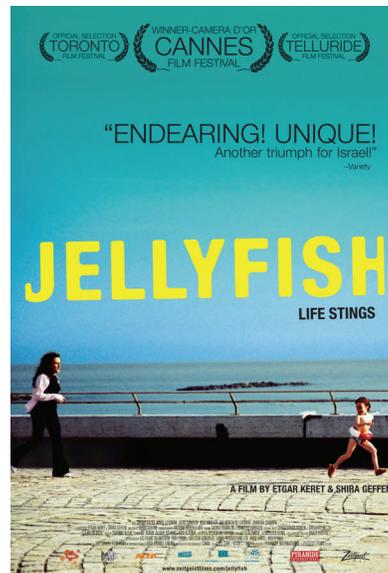
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The University of Oklahoma is an equal opportunity institution.

FILM FESTIVAL SERIES

Presented each year by the Schusterman Program in Judaic and Israel Studies in partnership with OU's The Other Film Club, this program highlights cutting-edge (and often edgy) films which deal with subjects pertinent to Judaic and Israel Studies. This year's choices were all Israeli films and featured the relationship between a 5 year-old Chinese boy and an El Al flight attendant in *Noodle*; an Egyptian band abandoned in a small backwater Israeli town in *The Band's Visit*; the last days of deployment for soldiers stationed at a famed military outpost in Lebanon in *Beaufort*; and the story of three Tel Aviv women and their intersecting lives in *Jellyfish*.



ALEPH TO TAV: A TALE OF TWO LECTURES

Hard to imagine two lecturers more different than Meir Shalev, one of Israel's best-loved novelists, and Sarah Griswold, Educational Director of the Museum of Jewish Heritage in New York and proud product of Norman public schools! But they were among two of the program's outstanding speakers this past year.

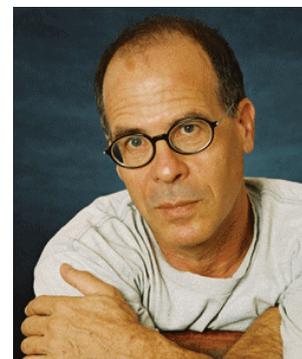
Meir Shalev, ranked by connoisseurs of Israeli literature on the same par with the more overtly political Amos Oz and A. B. Yehoshua, spoke mainly about his latest novel *A Pigeon and A Boy*, winner of Israel's Brenner Prize. The twin tales of homing pigeons and lovers is an intricate narrative, part Gabriel Garcia Marquez and part Woody Allen. Shalev was clearly delighted, and perhaps surprised, with the turn-out in the Oklahoma Memorial Union. He was also captivated by the dry flats of Oklahoma, a little reminder of the Golan Heights. During his lecture Shalev re-constructed the writing process of his novel noting that he has now won awards from both entomological and aviary so-

cieties, a peculiar distinction. **Sarah Griswold**, hometown hero, charmed and enlightened a packed lecture hall with her description of the Museum of Jewish Heritage's exhibit of Irene Nemirovsky's *Suite Francaise*. Nemirovsky, who perished in Auschwitz in 1942, was already a celebrated novelist when she decided to chronicle the Nazi occupation of France, both from Paris and subsequently from the small village of Issy-L'Eveque. Born in Kiev, in 1903 to an aristocratic, acculturated Jewish family, the Nemirovskys fled during the Russian Revolution of 1917. Her manuscript, in tiny hand-written script, was preserved by her family sixty-five years before it became the book *Suite Francaise*. Following the outstanding success of the novel, the Jewish Museum of Heritage decided to build an exhibit around Nemirovsky. As curator, Griswold was able to explain not only the story of Nemirovsky's life and the manuscript, but also the dynamics of a museum exhibit.



Sarah Griswold

Meir Shalev



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2009-10 Brown-bag Lecture Series Continues Diverse Offerings

JuSt LUNCH Brown-bag Lecture Series, our once monthly lecture, captures the program's ethos: informal, diverse, and high quality. This year, our very popular brown bag featured lectures on a kosher slaughterhouse in Iowa, a Moroccan Francophone comic and literary parallels in Roman literature and the Talmud.

**"Christian Author, Jewish Book?
George Eliot's *Daniel Deronda*"**

Alan T. Levenson
Schusterman Professor
OU Department of History

"Gad Elmaleh, the Comedy of the Other"

Dinah Assouline Stillman
Instructor of French
OU Department of Modern Languages

**"Got Guilt? Joseph & Jesus in the
Jewish-Christian Dialogue of the Middle Ages"**

Shmuel Shepkaru
Professor of Medieval Judaic History
OU Department of History

"Postville Redux"

Robert L. Griswold
Hudson Professor and Chair
OU Department of History

**"Honor and Shame in Greek Literature and the Talmud:
Echoes of Greek Romance in Avodah Zarah 18"**

Prof. Kyle Harper
OU Department of Classics

**"The Construction of the 'Jewish Body'
at the Turn of the 20th Century"**

Prof. Klaus Hödl
Center for Judaic Studies
University of Graz, Austria

**"The Anti-Defamation League
and the Civil Rights Movement"**

David Chappell
Rothbaum Professor
OU Department of History